

## ***Connecting With Professionals***

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Definition:

Case Management is assisting clients in negotiating for services that they both need and want.

Benefit:

Case Management improves the quality of life of clients

Activities:

Connecting with clients (We must also connect with professionals)

Case Management is a two way street for communication. We must learn to communicate with the case managers as well as expect the case managers to communicate with us.

We must first make all our appointments. First, showing up for an appointment demonstrates that we are interested in having a close relationship.

We can learn how to develop a close relationship with the case managers and other professionals. We must remember that, as with all relationships, there will be days of ups and downs. Some days we will feel alienated (angry?) from the professionals. We can learn to keep coming back and working with the case managers and professionals.

If there ever comes a time we can no longer work with a specific professional in our recovery program, we can find the right professional for us. We must also learn that increased demands, that we put on an over worked mental health system, can have negative consequences for us. Case managers and professionals can come to see us as a burden. We want the system to work for us.

The optimal experience is: Connecting with the professionals.

Connecting with the professionals

We should understand that many professionals should want to establish a close bond with us. They should learn to know us. A problem is that some professionals are taught to have boundaries between us and them. We must be prepared for some distance between ourselves and the professionals. After we demonstrate our sincerity for recovery, their interest in us can increase. We hope for closeness, respect and communication. We must learn to forgive and go on with our recovery when we don't get the response that we were looking for. Case Management is not therapy. Case management is for delivery of services in our recovery process. The better the case manager can get to know us, then the more refined the selection and delivery of mental health services can be for us. Closeness can work for us and them. We must learn how to be close.

The four types of closeness are: physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual

Physical closeness is based on the need for our companionship. Just old fashioned friendship. Some professionals will hesitate and not want to become too close. We must remember, as with any relationships, that we have to demonstrate friendship to receive friendship.

Remember, if we go into any conversation with "unresolved anger," we will always limit our ability to have a "close bond."

The need for emotional closeness is based on intimacy with other people.

Share the experiences you feel comfortable about. Remember most of us have experienced a lot of emotional pain. The professional sitting across from us can only take in so much information. Some consumers want to tell all they are feeling in one hour. No human can absorb that much. The case manager will probably see three or four other consumers that day. We will only see the one case manager. We must learn not to do emotional dumping.

Our recovery depends not just on our ability to succeed in a mental health program but our eventual lasting recovery depends on integration into our community. By learning how to have emotional disclosure in our program, we are learning a "life skill" of emotional disclosure in the community.

Intellectual closeness is the need to have a shared association with people who have the same interests and opinions. We might want to discuss some "world ideas" with the case manager. Some professionals who work in mental health may want to see us "keep on track." They might not want to discuss philosophies and ideas which don't seem related to the topic of the interview. The value of keeping on track can be appreciated. We must learn to tie what we are saying and thinking into the reason for our conversation.

Remember, we can say that we have some other pressing concerns that we would like to first talk about. As long as we know what we are saying and can explain what we are saying, we stand a better chance of being respected and listened to.

Connecting with the professional, means that we have a trusting relationship with the professional. We must learn how to make ourselves understood. Connecting with the professional is a two way experience. They must learn how to connect with us. But, we must also learn how to connect with them.

Spiritual closeness is based on talking about intangible essences of life. This may require us to talk about our beliefs about what is moral, and true. We can always preface this discussion with case manager by saying something like, "I want you to know me better so I'd like you to know these about my beliefs."

### Connecting With The Case Manager (Show slide)

We must remember that we are building a long term relationship. The needs for services in mental illness recovery can take up to and beyond fifteen years. We are trying to have a relationship with someone or an agency who can do something for us that we can not do for ourselves. For many service agencies, the case manager will be the one representing us. Case managers will change but case management as part of the agency will continue. Case management is here to stay. We must learn to use the system.

We must build a trusting relationship between the consumer and the case manager.

The same qualities of compatibility, acceptance, respect, mutuality and caring that the case manager should have are what we should exhibit to the case manager.

### Skills For Connecting With Clients

Demonstrating Understanding is describing accurately to another person his or her ideas, experiences or beliefs. We must make ourselves know to the case manager. We have to learn how not to become frustrated or overly angry. There is no reason why consumers can't practice describing our ideas, experiences and beliefs to other consumers before we see our case manager.

Self-disclosing is sharing our ideas, experiences, and/or beliefs with another person. We are expected to self-disclose. We must be open to ask the case manager their opinions and experiences. We need to hear what others have to say. If you don't hear the other person's ideas, experiences and/or beliefs, then, be sure to ask.

Inspiring is arousing a sense of positive, personal purpose. We have to remember that the professionals are in need of this. They become tired and overworked. We need to have them work with through inspiration. Care and love can not be mandated. The professionals must be inspired to work with us. We must come in and show them consideration and eagerness to start and continue our recovery program.

Discriminating Closeness Needs is distinguishing whether another person needs and wants to be physically, emotionally, intellectually and/or spiritually close to us. We should remember that case management is a new concept. Most professionals come from another time of training. We must learn to discriminate how close the case manager wants to be with us. Some case managers will want to keep large boundaries. We can help bring the case manager closer to us by demonstrating we can be trusted. We can receive friendship by being friendly. Remember case managers are just people, they can have family problems, a bad day, not feel well or just be tired of seeing us. The secret is to let go of the small unpleasant experiences and remember the entire time together. If we want to be close to a person that person will generally want to be close to us. We must remember that no matter how hard we try to please some people, there will be those who do not like us. There will come times when we might have to go on and maybe find a new case manager. Changing programs, case managers, or recovery plans is always done as the option of last resort.

We might find connecting difficult. We should remember that we must learn to be polite, not become discouraged and keep returning back. Connecting is an ongoing process that is part of each time we spend with the case manager.

We must be prepared to keep learning these ongoing connecting skills. We must practice sharing our ideas, experiences and/or beliefs with the case manager.

Developing a person-to-person relationship is work for the case manager and for us. The better we can become at this practice then the deeper and more long lasting will be our recovery.

### Demonstrating Understanding

Through demonstrating understanding we acknowledge that the case manager has ideas, experiences or beliefs. We need to hear the case manager. We need to expect them to hear us. When any two people meet and stay together, they change each other. Our contact with the case manager will have a transformation on us and we will have a transformation on the case manager. We must be prepared that case management is a new field. Many case managers have not worked a long time with people who are mentally ill. Case management for some people is the first job that they got right after graduation. We must learn to understand case managers as we expect them to understand us. Understanding is empathy. We must learn to demonstrate our understanding to the case manager.

Through broader understanding of the case managers and our relationship to the case managers, we can begin to creatively explore our life options. Recovery will require a series of programs phases and treatment strategies. We must learn to focus on what works. Understanding and empathy are the opposite of blame. Our recovery will not be smooth. We must be prepared for to try to understand our case managers. By understanding them and ourselves, we can begin to move to an understanding of the larger world. Our integration into society will require a lot of understanding. We can learn understanding at every opportunity that we will have with our case managers.

Don't be afraid to ask questions and repeat what we will be told by our case managers. Our interaction with case managers is a learning process. We must make sure that we understand the ideas, shared experiences and beliefs. We will receive a series of tips from our case manager. We will spend one or two hours a week with our case managers. We must make sure that we understand the ideas being transmitted to us. We will have to spend the rest of the week for several hours a day to practice what we have learned in that one hour session.

Do not be afraid to interact in your session with your case manager.  
Ask questions  
Make sure you understand.  
Write notes.

#### Self-Disclosing

Self-disclosing is sharing your ideas, experiences, and/or beliefs with another person. Through self-disclosure we can build trust. We should expect self-disclosure from the case manager. If we need to know more from our case managers, we can ask.

Remember, what we ask for is not the problem, it is how we ask that can create the problem.

Self-disclosure must be used with restraint. Give people a chance to know us before we disclose every waking thought to someone. We are trying to build a long term relationship with our case manager and department of case management. We need to realize that this relationship is not built in one session. We must also realize that case managers will change but case management will stay. Through self-disclosure we are learning how to build small steps to a larger personal and organizational relationship.

Let us talk about how we can use these point of self-disclosure. Let's remember that self-disclosure is not just for our emotional relief, self-disclosure is to share an experience, idea or belief with another person so that they come to know us better. We want to bring the case manager closer to us so that we can have the best services available for our recovery.

Break into small groups and discuss these ideas:

Describing-used to elaborate on our ideas and beliefs

Genuineness-used mostly to express your emotional feelings about the event in personal life

Immediacy-Used when the client wants to share personal reactions to the case manager.

Disagreeing-used to contrast differences in the client's and case manager's perspectives.

The three steps of self-disclosure

1. Formulate your disclosure. You can be prepared with some ideas before you see your case manager. We must learn to write some ideas, experiences or beliefs out before we come to see the case manager.

2. Select the best type of statement to share. We can think about what we want to say. We will want to make sure that our statement will be of benefit to the case manager's positive image of us. We are trying to develop a friendship. Don't be afraid to say the truth. Many times it is not what we say but how we say it.

3. Choose whether to share. We don't have to say what we came to talk about. If the direction of our conversation is going another way, we can share another topic or not say anything at all. We are not bound to hold our ground and first to any preconceptions.

Definition Of Inspiring

Inspiring is arousing a sense of positive, personal purpose.

Case manager need to be inspired. We need to inspire all the staff in our recovery process. Many times we will enter an agency and meet the receptionist. She will later talk to the case manager. We need to learn how to inspire people all the way through the system to be part of our recovery process.

We have suffered a lot of emotional suffering. We need to be inspired. We also need to inspire others to work with us. We need to understand there can be a cycle of inspiration. Many times in mental health there is a cycle of blame. Through a cycle of inspiration, we consumers can help activate our recovery process.

We need to learn about the different programs and treatment plans. We need to be able to know and talk about other people's success stories. We need to learn how to direct our energies to take an interest in our program, case managers, family members and

other consumers. We need to see that every one who comes in contact with us - is part of the recovery team.

We need to understand what is positive in our lives. We can acknowledge the negative but we should learn on how to make negativity short. Acknowledge the negative perspectives but make it short

Identify the personal truths about positive meaning of our lives. Where would we like to go. What are our dreams and hopes. How did we overcome fears and obstacles. We must learn to show that we are ready to recover. We can learn to see understand the negative while going forward with our eye on the positive.

We can bring in books we have read. We can share positive aspects of our discoveries. We are not to shut out or not talk about the negative. We need to see what we have been through. Only through our inspiration will we continue on the road to recovery. We need other people for our recovery. We need to learn to learn how to inspire others as well as ourselves.

We must remember that people can be sometimes made to help us in our recovery but through inspiration their participation is deeper and longer lasting. Recovery from mental illness can come through full participation of a variety of people. We will the help of all. We can never forget that we will have leave everyone inspired from the receptionist to the director of the program.

#### Discriminating Closeness Needs

Discriminating closeness needs is whether the other person wants to be physically, emotional, intellectually and/ or spiritually close to us.

We must not be afraid to try to build those bridges to our case managers. We can remember being hurt by others in the past. We became reluctant to become involved with others after that hurt. Our case managers and other professionals are just people. If we become angry, they can become distant from us. We must learn to say that we are sorry. We must learn that any relationship has personality conflicts. We should learn that we might be for a particular case manager or program. Our changing case managers or leaving the program is our last option. By learning how to work with others through closeness, we can transfer these closeness skills into other parts of our lives.

Look at our behavior. Do we exhibit trust. Do we want to be close. Are we willing to show that we have the will to be close physically, emotionally, intellectually and/or spirituality.

Isolation is the opposite of closeness. Mental Illness has driven us into isolation. We can accelerate recovery through learning how to be close. Learning to be close to the case manager is practice in learning how to be close to other humans in the future.

There will be times that the case managers will accompany us. During that time we will have physical closeness. We can use the accompanying experience for learning to be

close with the psychological needs. In the past touching was frowned upon the therapeutic community. Case management depends on more sophisticated understanding and relationship between them and us. We must learn how to be close. Our relationship with the case manager is more of an active relationship. We must learn how to be close and not be afraid.

Our experience with case managers is different than with therapists. We are on the go. We are looking for a recovery strategy. We are sometimes accompanied to an office or hospital. We must learn to accept closeness.